DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 398 540 CS 012 556

AUTHOR Ufferman, Corinne
TITLE Improving Kindergarten Children's Emergent Literacy Skills.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 87p.; M.A. Project, Saint Xavier University.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Action Research; *Beginning Reading; Early Childhood Education; *Emergent Literacy; *Family Environment; *Instructional Effectiveness; *Kindergarten; Listening Skills; Low Income; *Reading Aloud to Others; Reading Improvement; Reading Research
IDENTIFIERS *Concepts about Print Test

ABSTRACT

A study described and evaluated a program for improving emerging literacy skills to better prepare children for beginning reading instruction. The targeted population consisted of kindergarten children in a blue-collar, lower-income community located at the southwest border of a large midwestern city. The problem of limited emerging literacy skills was documented using scores from a survey of concepts about print and researcher observations of reading and writing behaviors. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that targeted students had limited shared literacy activities at home prior to formal schooling and restricted access to reading and writing materials at home. The children had varied formal preschool experiences or they spent time in day-care centers that did not focus on developmentally appropriate literacy activities. Many families in the community have limited social, cultural, and economic resources. A review of solution strategies combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the selection of an intervention involving adult volunteers who engaged in literacy activities with targeted children on a daily basis using a variety of appropriate reading materials. Post intervention data indicated an increase in the understanding of concepts about print for the targeted children. In addition, targeted children improved in the areas of listening and interacting behaviors in a one-on-one setting as well as in a group situation. (Contains 39 references and 3 tables of data. Appendixes present survey instruments, observation sheets, guidelines for volunteer readers, tips on reading to children, and a list of books used.) (Author/RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE
The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to:
In our judgment, this document is also of interest to the Clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view.

ED 398 540

IMPROVING KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN'S EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

by

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

*Corinne Ufferman

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

St Xavier University & IRI/Skylight
Field Based Master's Program

Action Research Project
Site: Tinley Park II
Submitted: April 1996

*Teacher
Lincoln School
Blue Island, IL

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CS013556

SIGNATURE PAGE

This project was approved by

J. Timothy Leonard
Advisor

John B. Davis
Advisor

Terry Stirling
Dean, School of Education

Abstract

Author: Corinne Ufferman Site: Tinley Park II

Date: March 31, 1996

Title: Improving Kindergarten Children's Emergent Literacy Skills

This report describes a program for improving emerging literacy skills in order to better prepare children for beginning reading instruction. The targeted population consisted of kindergarten children in a blue-collar, lower-income community located at the southwest border of a large midwestern city. The problem of limited emerging literacy skills was documented using scores from a survey of concepts about print and researcher observations of reading and writing behaviors.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that targeted students have had limited shared literacy activities at home prior to formal schooling and restricted access to reading and writing materials in the home. The children have had varied formal preschool experiences or they have spent time in day-care centers that do not focus on developmentally appropriate literacy activities. Many families in the community have limited social, cultural, and economic resources.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the selection of an intervention involving adult volunteers who engaged in literacy activities with targeted children on a daily basis using a variety of appropriate reading materials.

Post intervention data indicated an increase in the understanding of concepts about print for the targeted children. In addition, the targeted children improved in the areas of listening and interacting behaviors in a one-on-one setting as well as in a group situation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Abstract		i
Chapter		
1	Problem Statement and Context	1
	General Statement of Problem	1
	Immediate Problem Context	1
	Surrounding Community	2
	Regional and National Context	4
2	Problem Definition	7
	Evidence of Problem	7
	Probable Causes of Problem	10
3	Solution Strategy	25
	Review of Literature	25
	Project Outcomes and Solution Components	37
	Action Plan for the Intervention	37
	Methods of Assessment	40

4 Project Results 41

Historical Description of the Intervention 41

Presentation and Analysis of Results 46

Conclusions and Recommendations 49

References Cited 52

Appendices 56

Appendix A - Modified CAP Observation Sheet 56

Appendix B - Observation of Writing and Reading Behaviors 57

Appendix C - Interview/Survey At-Home Reading Activities 58

Appendix D - Parent Permission and Preschool Survey 59

Appendix E - Volunteer Sign-up Sheet 60

Appendix F - Guidelines for Volunteer Readers 61

Appendix G - Record Keeping Sheet 62

Appendix H - Schedule 63

Appendix I - Guidelines for Volunteer Readers 64

Appendix J - Tips on Reading to Children 65

Appendix K - Letter to Volunteers 66

Appendix L - Volunteer Reader Survey 67

Appendix M - Weekly List of Books Used 68

Chapter 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

Many of the targeted kindergarten students have not acquired emergent literacy behaviors. Evidence of the problem includes an observation survey that measures concepts about print, and a teacher observation of writing and reading behaviors.

Immediate Problem Context

The targeted school is a kindergarten-only building. During the 1994-95 school year, it housed 212 students and included nine half-day kindergarten sections. Average class size at this school was 25.6 students. Four of the half-day kindergarten sections were part of the school district's Spanish bi-lingual program, and were taught by certified bi-lingual teachers. The remaining five sections were English-speaking. The racial-ethnic breakdown of the school was 52 percent Mexican-American, 33 percent White, and 15 percent African - American.

The staff of the targeted school consisted of five teachers: four full-time and one half-time. The average number of years experience was seven. During

the 1994-95 school year, two of the teachers were first year teachers, one teacher had three years experience, and the other two teachers had much longer tenures. Four of the teachers at this school had Bachelor's degrees and one had a Master's degree.

The principal of the targeted school divided her administrative duties between two schools in the district, the other school being a nearby primary school housing first and second grades.

In addition to the classroom teachers, the school was served by three itinerant teachers who taught physical education, music, and art. A school nurse, a social worker, and a speech pathologist were available to service children as needed, but were not housed at the school.

The kindergarten program at the targeted school was considered to be developmentally appropriate. In such a program, concepts are presented and children's responses differ according to what is appropriate for each individual child. Thus, children are allowed to grow and develop at their own rate.

The Surrounding Community

The targeted school is part of an elementary school district (K-8) with a total enrollment of 3,195 students. There are ten schools in the district. The district includes portions, but not all, of four neighboring communities. According to the 1994 School Report Card, the percentage of students in the district who came from low-income families was 47.7 percent. The number of students in the district who came from limited-English-proficient families was 12.1 percent. The student mobility rate in the district was 27.1 percent, and the attendance rate was 94.6 percent. The operating expenditure per pupil was $5,325. Average teacher salary was $35,268.

The administrative staff of the school district includes a superintendent, an administrator for business services, a general administrative assistant, and an administrator for pupil personnel services and Chapter I.

The board of education of the school district is composed of seven citizens of the school district who are elected to their positions. The board of education meets once a month. Parent and community concerns are addressed at each monthly meeting of the board of education.

The targeted school is located in a community of 21,203 residents, located at the southwest border of a large midwestern city. According to 1994-95 Quality Review Documentation, the community is considered to be a blue-collar, lower-income community. The racial composition of the community is 60 percent White, 14 percent African- American, and 25 percent Mexican-American. The median family income is $27,280 and the unemployment rate is 19 percent. The percentage of students completing high school is just over 62 percent. Families in this community are considered to have somewhat limited social, cultural, and economic resources. Information obtained from the community's Chamber of Commerce (1990) indicates that in 1990 the median home value was $65,084. However, it is worth noting that housing in this community is diverse, ranging from low-income subsidized housing to historical homes valued in excess of $200,000.

Over the years, concerns about student learning in the district have been discussed in a variety of settings. In March of 1991, a Strategic Planning Team was formed, consisting of community members, parents, administrators, school board members, and teachers. A District Mission Statement was developed as a result and plans for improvement were developed and implemented by various committees whose members were drawn from the Strategic Planning Team.

There are a number of other parent support groups in the district, representing the interests of bi-lingual, gifted, Chapter I, and band and orchestra students. In addition, the schools in the district are served by such parent groups as Parent-Teacher Associations. The targeted school has an active PTA that also serves two neighboring schools.

In 1994, the school community passed an educational referendum that resulted in an increase in school funding. This successful passage followed two previous defeats, and the amount of the tax increase was only one-half of the amount the school board had initially recommended. As a result, several non-essential program cuts were made including the hot lunch program, some busing, recess for primary and intermediate students, and various after-school and extra-curricular activities. The referendum effort brought together a group of administrators, teachers, school board members, and parents from all four of the district's communities who worked for the passage of the referendum.

Regional and National Context of Problem

Emergent literacy is the term currently being used to describe early childhood reading and writing. As researchers focus increasingly on the study of literacy learning in young children, they are reaching the conclusion that there is no one point in time when a child's literacy begins. Rather, researchers are seeing children in the process of becoming literate (Teale and Sulzby, 1986). The process of becoming literate is a long and gradual one and the implication is that when children enter school they will be at different points in the emerging literacy process (Clay, 1991).

The idea of emerging literacy is replacing the previously widely used principles known as reading readiness. The concept of reading readiness can be traced back to the 1920's when educators began to look at early childhood

and kindergarten years as a period of preparation for the learning of reading. Prior to this time, the general belief among educators was that literacy development did not begin until the child began formal instruction in school (Teale and Sulzby, 1986). Over the years the concept of reading readiness underwent some fundamental changes, resulting in a new emphasis on the role of environmental factors in preparing children to learn to read. As the amount of research on young children grew, researchers were finding that pre-schoolers knew more than they had been given credit for. Partly as a result of Sputnik in 1957 and the social revolution of the 1960's, the trend became one of more direct instruction in a predetermined curriculum for pre-school and kindergarten programs. Reading readiness programs, which included activities to develop auditory discrimination and memory, visual discrimination and memory, knowledge of letter names and sounds, word recognition , and other general skills, became part of the kindergarten literacy curriculum, and they remained prevalent into the 1980's. According to Teale and Sulzby (1986), the concept of reading readiness affects people's thinking about literacy in two significant ways. First, it leads them to think of the early childhood period and the child's behaviors in this period as precursors to "real" reading and writing. Second, it implies to teachers and parents that learning to read and write begins in a school-like setting where readiness skills can be taught.

Objections to the reading readiness concept have become more apparent in research and theory in the last 15 years (Mason and Sinha, 1993). Many researchers studying literacy are now accepting the idea of emergent literacy. According to Teale and Sulzby (1986), recent studies about literacy development in early childhood have lead to several conclusions. Literacy development begins long before children start formal instruction. Listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities develop concurrently and interrelatedly,

rather than sequentially. Literacy develops in real-life settings for real-life activities. Children are doing cognitive work in literacy development during the years from birth to six. Children learn written language through active engagement with their world. Children's learning about literacy can be described in terms of generalized stages; however, children can pass through these stages in a variety of ways and at different ages.

Clay (1991) stated that the specific experiences that children have before they go to school may affect their progress as they begin reading instruction. Among these experiences are opportunities for learning oral language, observations of the visual aspects of print, a sense of self-confidence and self-acceptance, opportunities to make sense and attach meaning to encounters with the world, and the ability to control the movement patterns of the body. Slaughter (1993) elaborated on this idea by adding that in order for children to become successful readers, they must have both a receptive and expressive facility with oral language, their visual perception skills should be reasonably well developed, they need to begin to understand the concept of words and that there is a connection between their vocabulary and the graphic marks called letters, and that a certain order and direction must be followed in order to read print on a page.

Because of the differences in preschool children's experiences, schools need to plan and provide activities for the first year of school which allow all children to widen their range of preschool experiences, regardless of where they are starting from. The school program should take all children from where they are into new aspects of literacy learning (Clay, 1991).

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Evidence

Two observation techniques were used to document the existence of kindergarten children in the targeted classroom who have not acquired emergent literacy skills. One is an observation survey that measures concepts about print and the other is an observation of writing and reading behaviors. Both measures were administered in a one-to-one setting by the researcher.

The Concepts About Print (CAP) survey (Appendix A) was used to determine how much each child in the targeted classroom understands about the way books are handled; the conventions of reading in terms of directionality, one-to-one match of spoken word to printed word, and line order and word order; the features of print including the differences between letters and words, upper case and lower case letters, and concepts of first and last. It should be noted that the CAP is primarily used in the targeted school district as one of several tools to identify first graders who may be at risk of early failure of formal reading instruction. As a result, the researcher modified the original form of the CAP somewhat to make it more appropriate for kindergarten children. Also, there are no norms for CAP scores used from kindergarten children, so there is no way of comparing the scores obtained from the targeted classroom with other

kindergarten children who may have been given the CAP. The results of the CAP survey are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

CAP Scores AM and PM Classes

Student AM	Score	Student PM	Score
1	16	1	16
2	15	2	14
3	14	3	14
4	14	4	14
5	14	5	12
6	13	6	11
7	12	7	10
8	12	8	9
9	11	9	9
10	11	10	8
11	11	11	8
12	11	12	7
13	9	13	7
14	9	14	7
15	8	15	7
16	8	16	6
17	8	17	6
18	8	18	6
19	8	19	4
20	7	20	4
21	7	21	3
22	6	22	3
23	4	23	3
24	4	24	2
25	4		
26	1		

Table 1 shows the range of scores for the 26 AM kindergarten children and the 24 PM children who were given the survey, from the highest score to the lowest score. The highest possible score on the modified version of the CAP is 20. It would appear that kindergarten children who scored from 11 and higher are fairly well acquainted with the conventions of book reading and will be

well-prepared for many of the early literacy learning tasks they will encounter in kindergarten and first grade. Children who scored ten or lower may not yet have acquired the types of book knowledge that will be crucial for them as they begin reading instruction in first grade.

Of the children who scored the lowest on the CAP, 13 were selected at random to receive the Observation of Reading and Writing Behaviors. (Appendix B) Six different writing and reading behaviors were being observed during this activity. The children were asked to draw a picture of themselves doing an activity they like to do, and then try to write a story about the picture. Most of the children immediately responded that they did not know how to write. The children were then urged to pretend they knew how to write and each child was able to make an attempt to do the task. The first behavior observed was whether or not the children understood the difference between pictures and print. Eleven children made a definite distinction between the pictures they drew and the placement of their writing, indicating that they understood the difference between a picture and what was written about the picture. Only two children added more details to their drawings when asked to write about their pictures. Eleven of the children moved from left to right as they did their writing task, while two of them did not move in a left to right direction. Of the five children who wrote more than one line of print, only one moved from top to bottom. The other four moved in a random fashion, sometimes writing above where they had previously written, and sometimes moving down and then up again. Five of the children made letters that were all recognizable as part of the English alphabet; four of them used writing that was not recognizable, but looked like scribble; four children used a combination of recognizable letters and non-recognizable letters.

The children were asked to try to "read" the message they had written, and the researcher observed the direction they appeared to be reading, urging the children to point with their finger as they read. During this task, seven of the children moved from left to right as they read; five of them made no attempt to move in any direction; one child read from right to left. During this task, the researcher also observed any attempt the children made to match what was being "read" to the print on the page. Six children made an attempt to do this, but were not successful. Seven children made no attempt. Finally, ten of the children demonstrated that they had some understanding of the connection of meaning between reading and writing, in that the message they "read" did have a connection to the story they "wrote." Three children did not make any connection in this manner; rather, they tended to ramble on about topics that had no connection to what they had drawn a picture of. This observation activity gave the researcher more insight as to the variety of understandings the targeted children have when it comes to the tasks of reading and writing.

Probable Cause

The children in the targeted classroom come from a diverse range of family backgrounds and because of this diversity, it is possible that the literacy experiences the children participate in at home may be very different from child to child. There may be a lack of reading and writing materials in the homes of some children, In addition, there may be a limited amount of shared literacy activities at home; for example, parent-child reading. Of the 50 children in the targeted classroom who were given the CAP observation survey, 25 children whose CAP scores ranged from the high end to the low end were interviewed regarding their participation in at-home literacy activities. (Appendix C) Because these children are very young, it should be noted that for many of them the

concepts of numbers and time are still very vague. Therefore, instead of providing quantitative data, the interviews provided qualitative results that help describe the types and range of activities these children experience at home. For example, when asked to tell what is fun about reading, some children mentioned looking at pictures and words; some talked about their favorite storybooks; others said it was funny or it helps you learn stuff. A few children talked about reading stories at bedtime, or listening to their teacher read books in school. Some children mentioned comic books as being good books. Two children responded in a way that indicated they were confusing books with videos that you watch and several children answered, "I don't know." When asked to tell what is not fun about reading, many children mentioned the names of particular books they didn't like because they were too long or boring. Several children said it's too hard, and some said it's bad if you make a mistake. One child said she gets upset if her mom doesn't read to her everyday and another responded that her mom hated to read because she's too tired after work. One child said he likes his toys better than books. Many children said they don't know how to read, and several responded that there is nothing that they don't like about reading. When asked if they had any books of their own at home, the responses ranged from "no" to "at least a thousand." Some children were very specific about how many books they thought they had and where they kept their books at home. Most children answered that their moms read to them when asked who reads to you at home, and several mentioned mom and dad, as well as older siblings, friends, cousins, and grandparents. A few children answered that no one reads to them, and one child indicated that her mom used to read to her but now she doesn't. As to how often the children are read to, the answers were quite vague, some children just nodding when asked if they were read to everyday or once a week. Many children responded, "Sometimes, I

think." The children were shown photographs of the local public library and asked if they knew what that place was. Once again, the responses ranged from instant recognition and positive responses about going there regularly, to confusion with a store where you get movies, to answers indicating that they did not know what that place was. A few children thought they had gone there one time or a few times. One child said her mother hates returning books, and another said she had gone there with her sister to return a book. Most children responded positively when asked if they had their own paper, pencils, markers, and crayons at home. When asked what they did with those items, many responded that they draw and color pictures. Most said they did not know how to write when asked if they ever write stories. A few children said they write stories with the help of an older sibling, or that they copy words that their moms write for them. One child said his mom and dad told him not to write stories, while another responded that he would rather watch movies. As a result of noting the range of responses among the children who were interviewed, it would seem that there is a wide variety of at-home literacy activity taking place among the children in the targeted classroom.

It is possible that there is not much verbal interaction between parents and young children. It may be that there is limited parental interest and enjoyment of reading. Due to the fact that the percentage of students in this community who complete high school is just over 62 percent, it may be that education is not valued in some families and that parents are not or cannot be actively involved in assuring that their children are properly prepared for formal schooling. Since many families in this community have limited social, cultural, and economic resources, it is possible that some children have not been exposed to the types of learning experiences that would provide them with background knowledge, such as family trips to museums, libraries, and other

cultural centers. It may be that some children in the targeted class, although not part of the district's bi-lingual program, are living in homes where they are exposed to two languages which may cause confusion as they approach early literacy tasks. Because of the range of diversity in the targeted classroom, it would also seem likely that the class would be composed of children from a variety of backgrounds whose preschool experiences, both formal and informal, would be very different depending on their family situations. Some children may have attended preschools that provided them with developmentally appropriate activities and experiences while others may have spent their preschool years in daycare centers. Some children may have had no preschool experiences.

As part of a parental permission form allowing the children in the targeted classroom to participate in the research study, parents were also asked to indicate what type, if any, of formal preschool experiences their children have had, and for how many years. (Appendix D) The results of the survey are shown in Table 2, as follows:

Table 2

Parent Survey Results - Formal Preschool Experience

Type of Program	Children/Years Participation			
	1 Year	2 Years	3Years	
Public School Early Childhood	3	4		
Headstart		3		
Skill - Oriented Preschool	3	6		
Park District Preschool	2	3		
Day Care	2	3	1	
Combination Park District/Skill Oriented	2			
Combination Headstart/Public School		1		
Combination Public School/Day Care		1		
No Preschool				6
No Response				10

There are five basic types of formal preschool structures shown in the table. The first is the early childhood program that is part of the public school district and provides preschool programs for children within the district who may be at risk for early school failure. Next is the Head Start program that traditionally has been known to provide developmentally appropriate preschool experiences for young children. Third is the skill-oriented program, often found in commercial preschool organizations and church-based programs. Fourth is the park district type of program that places more emphasis on social skills and play activities. The fifth category is day care, where children may be placed because of the care that is provided for children of working parents. It should be noted that the descriptions of the above programs are generalizations and there is a likelihood of overlap among the programs in terms of activities and experiences provided for young children. In addition it should be noted that the table shows several categories of combinations of different programs. As the table shows,

the children in the targeted classroom have had a wide range of formal preschool experiences. Of particular interest is that out of the 50 parents who gave permission for their children to be part of the study, six, or 12 percent, indicated that their children had no formal preschool experience. Ten parents, or 20 percent, did not respond to the question. This lack of response could be an indication of no formal preschool experience for these particular children, but this can only be an assumption.

Clay (1991) identified some specific problems children might bring with them as they begin school. Among these are varying degrees of sensory loss, including vision, hearing, and kinesthetic sensation. Emotional disturbances and physical impairments may also interfere with the young child's early reading progress. Some children may not have had the opportunities to engage in meaningful conversation with adults. Some children have had little interaction with books prior to their formal schooling and consequently have not developed book knowledge.

The literature suggests that home environment factors contribute greatly to early reading achievement. Greaney (1986) reported that home environment measures are more closely related to children's abilities and achievements than traditional measures such as socio-economic status. According to Greaney, the quality of parent-child interactions in the home have an effect on the development of reading skills and leisure reading habits of young readers. Parental verbal interactions help children develop linguistic skills which are important for beginning readers. Parental interest in and valuing of reading both contribute to children's confidence and interest in reading, and lead to better performance on reading tasks. Children's interest in reading may be correlated to parental involvement in reading. Children who read early and develop habits of leisure reading tend to have parents who read. It is difficult for children to

develop an interest in reading if they lack suitable reading materials. Exposure of preschool children to reading materials is related to proficiency in reading, and parents of early readers tend to purchase reading materials and take children to the library frequently. Noisy conditions and overcrowding in the home can adversely affect reading performance and the extent of leisure reading in the home. Parents who can provide an appropriate atmosphere and opportunity for children to read are more likely to encourage leisure reading than those who for economic or other reasons cannot. Children's interest in books and performance on reading tasks are related to being read to while young. Greaney stated that these home environment measures are interrelated and they measure various aspects of an overall positive home support for reading. These measures also tend to correlate with socio-economic status and even more with level of parent education. The greater the level of experience parents have had with higher education, the more they prepare their children for formal school - providing appropriate readiness skills, attitudes, and values. This preparation is subsequently reflected in higher levels of reading achievement and the extent of leisure reading.

Other authors wrote of the impact of the home environment on preparing children for literacy learning. Clay (1979) stated that children who do not have appropriate book-sharing experiences before they enter school will have missed experiences to become familiar with book language, with concepts found in books, picture explorations, and will be lacking practice in coordinating language and visual perception in a way that facilitates progress with reading instruction in school. Clay (1991) also reported that language development of preschoolers, which is vitally important to progress in reading, is dependent on children's opportunities to converse with an adult. Consequently, children who have not been active explorers of language will have more difficulty with reading than

other children. According to McGee and Richgels (1990) young children learn about written language because they are already learning about spoken language. The two are mutually supportive and work in many of the same ways. Young children acquire knowledge about reading and writing because they are learning, social, language-using creatures. Children learn when they are given opportunities to engage in problem-solving, when their needs to interact with others are met, and whenever language is involved. Carroll and Walton (1979) stated, "Before beginning to learn to read in a particular language...the child typically will have attained considerable skill in understanding the spoken form of the language." (page 336) Inadequate language and communication skills may interfere with children's abilities to attend to and understand the stories that are part of most instructional programs Children may have the ability to understand English at the sentence level and in ordinary conversation, and yet be unable to comprehend longer discourse. This may be due to problems with attention and concentration but it may also be due to unfamiliarity with the conventions of storytelling.

Teale (1978) in his review of studies of preschool reading attempting to identify environmental factors which influence early literacy, found that there are four interdependent factors: an availability and range of printed materials including books and environmental print and environments that facilitate children's contact with various types of printed material; environments where printed stimuli are interpreted for children so they can come to realize the functions of written language and shared story-reading sessions which help children become aware of the structure and nature of written language; environments that facilitate contact with paper and pencil since an interest in scribbling, copying and writing often lead to an interest in reading; and

environments that respond to what children are trying to do, including significant adults who read to children, read repeatedly, and answer children's questions.

A growing awareness of print does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, it depends on children growing up in an environment where interactions with print are a source of social and intellectual pleasure for children and the adults in their lives. The typical American child has had hundreds of hours of storybook reading and several thousand hours of overall literacy support prior to formal schooling. However there are numbers of children who grow up with little support for literacy, without exposure to adults who like to read and without paper and pencil to experiment with. Such children approach school with very little literacy learning. Classroom learning and understanding depend on a prior awareness of print and how books work. "Such global awareness of the forms, functions, and uses of print provides not just the motivation but the basic conceptual backdrop against which reading and writing may be learned." (Adams, 1990, p.337)

Taylor (1983) cited evidence of how the family serves to support the development of literacy in children. In case studies of young children who were well on their way to becoming good readers, there was a pattern of regular shared reading sessions, opportunities for children to draw and write on a daily basis, occasions for children to observe their parents involved in literacy activities, and frequent play activities involving reading and writing. In these studies, parents reported that they had not intentionally taught their children to read and write, but rather responded to their children's spontaneous literacy activities. Taylor believed that children from literate environments such as these have a tremendous advantage in learning to read and write. She went on to state that many children fail to learn to read because they have never had the opportunity to experience the different moment-to-moment uses of print.

Payne, Whitehurst, and Angell (1994) concurred with Taylor that limited literacy-related activities in the home may have significant effects on language development and subsequent reading achievement. In their study of the relations between home literacy environment and child language ability for a group of four year olds attending Head Start, they found the children experienced infrequent exposure to shared picture book reading and that the types of book interactions varied according to the forms of the mothers' speech to the children. They also found substantial differences among low-income families in literacy environment and that these differences have strong effects on children's language development.

Goodman and Haussler (1986) discussed children who see adults who are afraid to read or who find writing difficult may also develop fear and resistance to reading and writing. They went on to discuss parents who may not recognize the importance of their role in literacy learning. These parents may not know how best to help their children. They may view formal instruction as the only method for achieving literacy and do not realize their critical role in providing children with literacy experiences at home. Parents who do not recognize the importance of print in the environment and the significance of their children's scribbling as they experiment with writing need to understand the developmental importance of their young children's attempts to read and write.

Adams (1990) reported that ethnographic research has shown that poverty is not the major determinant of the literacy preparation a child receives at home. Rather, homes that do not support early literacy are defined by the values and style of the social communities to which they belong; not income, social class, parental education, or race. Children from such homes are growing up in an environment where reading and writing are not considered valuable activities. In such communities, there is a lack of reading materials for children

to interact with, and limited adult involvement in shared literacy activities. There are no school-like conversations or learning situations and reading is viewed as an activity done to accomplish an immediate purpose, not for enjoyment. Children from these communities may be socially competent and at ease with oral language; however this type of oral language may not be rewarded or even accepted in school. Such children may fall into a pattern of school failure.

Recent research has shown that it is not only the number of experiences young children have with books, but the kind and quality of these experiences that influence what they know about reading (Goodman and Haussler, 1986). As parents respond to their children's curiosity about books and other print, they are giving them access to the meaning that print represents. When parents read, they are modeling what a reader is, what reading is and why it is done, and even how it is done. Children whose parents share books with them begin learning the technical aspects about reading (Chapman, 1986). Slaughter (1993) believed that shared reading helps children make connections between events in their world, builds bridges between the concrete and abstract, meets the child's needs for beauty and knowledge, assists in the development of perception and discrimination, allows children to retell stories and create new ones, and stimulates language development. Doake (1986) stated that if parents take on the responsibility of reading regularly to their children, the number of children who fail to make books and reading an integral part of their lives would be greatly reduced.

According to Strickland and Morrow (1990), the positive verbal interaction that takes place during story reading plays a major role in literacy development. Children respond with questions, comments, and offer information about their understandings of what is being read. Over time, parent-child interactions become more complex and demonstrate more sophisticated thinking about

written language. Morrow (1988) believed that parent-child story reading sessions should include questions before the reading to prepare the child for the story, verbal interactions between adult and child during the reading to relate story experiences to the child's life, questions posed after the story asking for evaluative responses, and positive reinforcement for the child's responses. Morrow reported on a study by Shanahan and Hogan that compared interactive behavior by adults during story reading with children's achievement on a test of print awareness and found that the minutes of book reading per week, the number of answers to the child's questions, and the number of references to the child's own experiences were the best predictors of the child's achievement on the measure used in the study.

Morrow (1988) found that children in lower socio-economic status communities seem to be read to less frequently than other children and that the difference in the interactive behaviors between lower SES homes and those in higher SES homes may be related to higher levels of vocabulary development for the higher SES children. In addition, in middle class homes more "why" questions are asked and affective comments are offered, whereas in lower SES settings, more "when" and "what" questions are used. This puts these children at a disadvantage when they are expected to respond to higher level questions in school. Dunning, Mason, and Stewart (1994) reported that recent examinations of parents' book reading behaviors in low income families found that children are not being prepared for the later challenges of school. The majority of talk in these families' shared book experiences centers on immediate information only, such as labeling, picture naming, and locating objects. Although parents may be aware of children's needs for more sophisticated forms of conversational interactions, they are not providing opportunities for practice.

Holdaway (1979) reported that a lack of experience with the structure of written language (logical arrangement, time sequence, cause and effect, plot) can present a significant obstacle in learning to read. Familiar stories shared with an adult have provided a "literacy set" for young children which will help them develop appropriate skills and provide them with incentives to read and write. The literacy set includes motivational factors such as enjoyment and appreciation, linguistic awareness including syntax, vocabulary, intonation, and idioms, operational factors which are strategies for handling written language, and orthographic knowledge which include an understanding of the conventions of print. Holdaway believed that the sooner book-orientation activities begin, the more likely it is that book handling and experimental writing will become an important part of the young child's daily activities. Children enter into independent reading-like play which develops into picture-stimulated, then page-matched, and finally story-complete behavior. "Children with a background of book experiences since infancy develop a complex range of attitudes, concepts, and skills predisposing them to literacy." (page 49)

Another possible factor contributing to kindergarten children's weakness in the area of early literacy skills is the type of formal preschool experiences they have had. Elster (1984) stated that since the late 1960's many American preschools and kindergartens have focused on helping children gain knowledge of the surface features of written language (letter names, shapes, and sounds) through paper and pencil tasks. Hiebert (1988) reported that skill-based programs have been transplanted into kindergarten and even preschool settings, despite the fact that many early childhood educators feel that young children should not be rushed into developmentally inappropriate practices. Teale and Sulzby (1989) concurred, saying that reading and writing should be taught to all children in day care facilities, in child development centers, in Head Start

programs, in preschools, in prekindergarten programs, and in kindergartens. However, Teale and Sulzby (1989) went on to say that teachers of young children must realize that the ways in which reading and writing are taught must be developmentally appropriate. A worksheet dominated reading curriculum which pays major attention to letter naming and letter sound matching is clearly inappropriate for young children.

Clay (1991) illustrated the problems young children may have as they begin group instruction in school. As a teacher is discussing a picture and writing a story which is displayed to a group of young children, 30 percent of the children will be looking at the picture instead of the written text. If the teacher directs the children's attention to the words and asks them to look for familiar words, 50-90 percent will be searching for letters.. Although the teacher may be directing them to particular features and sounds of letters, some children may be focusing on other letters they are more familiar with. Teachers may be taking for granted insights which some children do not have; children are at different starting points and the teacher doesn't always know what is controlling their attention. Carroll and Walton (1977) explained that some children have problems with attention and concentration as they listen to a story and this can be caused by unfamiliarity with the conventions of storytelling. These conventions include the viewpoint of the narrator, the type of dialogue, the time frame, and information given to the hearer of the story. Although many children will have no trouble grasping these conventions, particularly if they are read to at home, some children may not catch on to these conventions readily. Unfortunately, many reading programs pay little attention to the development of story understanding skills.

Greaney (1986) stated, "In the final analysis, the child's ability to read and willingness to read for information and leisure may depend to a great extent on

the degree of success and sheer pleasure experienced in previous encounters with the printed word." (p.817) According to Teale (1984), researchers and teachers agree that there are positive correlations and direct causal links between being read to and achievement in reading. Teale stated that children can learn to read without being read to as preschoolers; however "results from research consistently indicate that being read to is one type of experience that delightfully and effectively ushers a child into the world of literacy." (p.124)

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

"The great value of research on prereaders may lie in the clues it gives us toward determining what the less prepared prereader needs most to learn. For these children, we have not a classroom moment to waste." (Adams,1990, p.90) Adams further stated that these less prepared prereaders must be helped to develop an awareness of the phonemic composition of words and of the phonemic significance of letters. In addition they should be provided with the types of prereading skills that the reading-ready child has already acquired, as well as experiences with the pleasures and functions of text and literary language and style.

The literature suggests that there are many activities that parents may engage in with their children to promote their language development and early literacy skills. Clay (1979) stated that language development depends almost entirely on opportunities for young children to converse with an adult. Children need to be engaged in conversation and there are many ways parents can facilitate this interaction. Activities that permit frequent and varied repetition and feature rhythmic movement, alliteration and voice modulation will help develop auditory discrimination skills. Sharing the reading of storybooks which feature such language patterns may help. Increased opportunities to scan new material, organize new perception, label it, assign meaning to it, and remember it will aid

visual perception. This may be accomplished in play experience, in conversations with people who point out visual features of objects and pictures, and in contact with books. In addition, Clay believed that parents and teachers should encourage young children's self-acceptance and self-confidence, attitudes that will encourage participation in effective learning experiences.

McCormick and Mason (1980) reported the results of an intervention procedure for pre-kindergarten children involving the home use of "little books." In this study the children were shown how to "read" simple little books and their parents were given written guidelines about how to work with their children using the books at home, allowing for emergent reading behaviors on the part of the children. The results showed that easy-to-read books were especially helpful to children who are less well-prepared for reading. The most obvious effect was that the children liked the stories and they could easily act like readers using books they could "read" and recite and which belonged to them. One factor in the success of this program was the level of parental involvement that was fostered by the children's interest in reading. Sharing little books involved both children and parents in an activity that was easy for them to carry out. As a result, parents became more involved in answering their children's questions about letters and words. The use of little books made a significant impact on the children's interest in pre-reading and knowledge of letters and words.

Whitehurst et al.(1988) studied the effects of instructing parents to change their questioning techniques during storybook reading sessions. This home-based intervention was designed to optimize parental reading to young children. Parents were encouraged to increase their use of open-ended questions, use more function and attribute questions, and expand the discussions of stories. They were asked to decrease the frequency of straight reading and questions that could be answered by pointing. In this study the

children in the experimental group scored significantly higher than the children in the control group on posttests of expressive language ability. Based on their findings, the authors designed an intervention based on three general principles. Techniques were used during storybook reading that encouraged the child to engage in conversation. The child was given feedback, including modeling and scaffolding on the part of the adult . There was a progressive change in questioning which was sensitive to the child's developing abilities. The authors concluded that variations in reading techniques can have appreciable effects on language development. Active responding on the part of the child is extremely important in terms of language development. Furthermore, they speculated that continued practice increases fluency of language, that parent questioning provides children with opportunities to contrast their own language style with that of their parents, and that corrective feedback gives the children important motivational and informational data.

Goodman and Haussler (1986) believed that parents must be informed of the importance and nature of their role in their children's literacy learning. Some ways this might be accomplished is through parent conferences during which teachers could answer questions as well as make some discoveries about the type of literacy experiences the child is engaging in at home, parent meetings that could provide explanations of the kinds of reading and writing activities being used in school and how parents can support their children's literacy development at home, and letters to parents that could offer information and address areas of concern. Taylor and Walls (1990) agreed that parents need to be informed about what they can do to help their children become literate. They reported on the efforts of a kindergarten teacher who sends a message home early in the year to let parents know the importance of reading to children daily, talking about stories together, and enjoying books.

Adams (1990) believed that the classroom and school should be an environment rich in the functional use of written language. The play environment should include literacy activities and reading should be modeled as an activity that helps gain meaning in many areas of the curriculum. Hiebert (1988) concurred, stating that beginning reading instruction should build directly on the literary experiences that children bring to school. According to Hiebert, research in language development has resulted in the idea that knowledge about the functions of literacy (how and why people read and write) might be as central to literacy as knowledge of the forms of literacy. Hiebert promoted implementing preschool and kindergarten programs that base their curriculum and instruction on emergent literacy research, including training for teachers, increased reading and writing experiences, encouraging children's independent interactions with books, and the "little book" program as described by McCormick and Mason (1990). Hiebert concluded that literacy activities can become an integral part of early childhood programs and as a result contribute to lifelong participation and interest in reading and writing.

Morrow, O'Connor and Smith (1990) discussed the results of a year long study involving at-risk kindergarten children. One group received a daily program of literature experiences including reading for pleasure, story retelling, repeated readings of favorite stories, interactive story reading, and recreational reading periods. The control group was engaged in a reading readiness program emphasizing letter recognition and letter/sound correspondence. The experimental group scored significantly better than the control group on story retellings, comprehension tests, and other measures. However there was no significant difference between the two groups on standardized measures of reading readiness. Definite storybook reading strategies were emphasized in the activities of the experimental group. The directed listening-thinking portion of

the session included pre-reading questions and discussion, the story reading, and a post- reading discussion, focusing on a specific aspect of comprehension. The story retelling activity was instructional as well as evaluative. It involved the children in reconstruction of the story and it helped develop comprehension, a sense of story structure, and oral language. Repeated readings and attempted readings on the part of the child lead to more verbal, non-literal interpretations of the story. Using this technique, children were allowed to make more interpretive responses to stories, including prediction, association, evaluation, and elaboration. Access to a classroom library corner gave children exposure to a wide variety of books and literacy materials, and increased their interest in reading materials. The authors found that comprehension of narrative and sense of story structure were enhanced when children were actively involved in story reading processes. The storybook reading program was effective in producing gains which were consistent with the goals of the reading program. The average child in the experimental group took 60 books home to look at or read, whereas the average child in the control group took home 20 books. When children in the experimental group were asked to "teach" a stuffed animal how to read, they focused on concepts about print and book handling, including such functions as directionality and attention to pictures. In addition they attempted to read the story themselves. The children in the control group, when asked to do the same task, looked primarily for letters they knew. When asked to explain how their teacher was teaching children to read, some of the responses from the experimental group included references to the fact that the teacher read to the class, and included other responses indicating the significance of the modeling of reading activities that the teacher engaged in and that the children understood the reading process as an activity that they were participating in. The responses of the control group to this question indicated

that these children did not know exactly how their teacher was teaching them to read, and often referred to activities such as writing in workbooks, circling letters, and saying letters of the alphabet. The authors concluded that inclusion of a substantial storybook reading component in kindergarten reading programs can help at-risk kindergarten children develop literacy skills.

Holdaway (1979) wrote about a method of applying the model of language-learning to the classroom where numbers of children must be considered and there is often a loss of visual intimacy which is found in preschool story sharing in at-home settings. The Shared Book experience uses enlarged versions of favorite storybooks as the classroom teacher leads groups of children in story sharing activities. During the sharing session there is modeling of the reading process, much like that which occurs during bed-time story reading sessions. Children are encouraged to join in on repetitive sections, to predict and suggest, and to engage in expressive activities. Re-reading of these enlarged books establishes oral models for the language of the book, allows children to gain oral practice, deepens their understandings and responses, teaches relevant reading skills, and provides additional listening experiences. Children are allowed opportunities to re-enact the reading experience in reading-like ways. The teacher's role is to model literacy in action and share the pleasures of literacy with children. Eventually as children move from emergent reading into "early reading," standard basal readers can be used in association with the shared book method.

Much has been written about the effects of shared reading experiences on the literacy development of young children. "The most valuable preschool preparation for school learning is to love books, and to know that there is a world of interesting ideas in them." (Clay,1991, p.29) From book sharing experiences, children find answers to their questions about meanings, words, and the world.

From discussions with parents about plot and literary devices children come to learn about meaning of texts and how to relate them to the real world. Within the context of meaningful stories they become aware of linguistic and visual features of books. Whitehurst et al.(1988) claimed that there is a widespread assumption on the part of researchers, based in part on descriptive behavior, that early picture book reading is causally related to language growth and later school achievement. However, these authors stated that empirical support for this notion is weak. Doake (1986) agreed that shared reading is essential and stated that if the home does not provide the child with experiences and opportunities to enjoy and learn from early experiences with books, the school must. Schools should incorporate the use of memorable storybooks and a natural approach of introducing children to print, methods that have been used successfully by parents who read regularly to their children. Slaughter (1993) went on to say that for children who have not had rich literacy-related experiences at home, story reading in early childhood classrooms is essential.

Scarborough and Dobrich (1994a) questioned the emphasis that has been put on shared reading experiences by many researchers in recent years. They claimed that the effect of reading to preschoolers is neither as strong nor as consistent as it is typically purported to be and can probably account for no more than eight percent of the variance in young children's reading achievement. These authors believed that there are other aspects of the home literacy environment that may be better predictors of children's literacy skills than the frequency of shared reading; two of them being socio-economic status and the level of the child's interest in literacy activities. In a reply to several other authors' reactions to their original article, Scarborough and Dobrich (1994b) stated they believed that the efficacy of shared reading should be examined in a larger context and in relation to other aspects of young children's home

experiences, skills, and attitudes. Lonigan (1994) in his reply to Scarborough and Dobrich (1994a) acknowledged that although children can become literate adults without significant exposure to reading with their parents during the preschool years, the appropriate question should be not if, but how much, reading to preschool children can promote the development of literacy skills. According to Lonigan, a moderately sized increase in early literacy skills due to shared reading may result in substantial increases in reading achievement during later school years. Dunning, Mason, and Stewart (1994) responded to Scarborough and Dobrich (1994a) by stating that shared reading is a feature of children's home literacy environment that merits attention. It is a variable that can influence children's developing literacy and conversational competencies and it can be successfully manipulated. These authors cited studies which support the connection between children's literacy interest and later reading achievement, between parental support and subsequent reading achievement, and between oral language development and later literacy achievement. In addition they felt that future studies are likely to confirm that parent book reading is related to language and literacy gains. Dunning, Mason, and Stewart agreed with Lonigan that more longitudinal research is needed to clarify the connections between shared reading and the development of children's literacy skills. Teale (1981) spoke of the limitations of research that indicates that there is a link between being read to and success in certain general competencies in language and literacy, but gives little insight into the specific consequences of reading to children and does not address important theoretical and practical issues of how competencies develop as a result of reading events.

For children who have had no acquaintance with books, who have very limited speaking vocabularies, and no apparent knowledge of letters or words, the shared reading experience helps develop basic vocabularies and oral

language skills. It shows children the purpose of text in stories and children begin to become aware of the conventions of print and spatial orientation on the page. As at-risk children participate in shared reading activities, they begin to become familiar with the entire story and gradually shift their attention to smaller segments of text - sentences, phrases, words, and letters (Slaughter, 1993). Clements and Warncke (1994) believed that children who have had limited experiences with home literacy activities should be read to everyday, several times a day, from a wide variety of reading materials. With these children it is important to establish some favorite books that become familiar to them and read them repeatedly at the children's request. By being given opportunities for emergent reading to take place, these children will "pretend read" from memory of the text and use of pictures. This is a first step in emerging literacy and can be accomplished in school for those children who have not had it happen at home.

Strickland and Morrow (1990) spoke of the value of repeated readings of familiar storybooks. Such experiences help children become readers in very specific ways. Repeated readings aid text memory and understanding of book language. In addition, children develop a sense of how literature sounds and they become experts on that story, they anticipate what will come next, and they are able to make predictions. McGee and Richgels (1990) believed that by engaging in a routine of repeated readings, children can learn that the pictures and text remain the same and they can test, retest, use and explore the unchanging words and phrases. During repeated readings children may begin to participate by supplying rhyming words or short phrases to complete a sentence of verse. Gradually they will take on more of the reading activity, providing memorized chunks of text. Martinez and Roser (1985) investigated how children's responses to literature changed with increasing familiarity with a

story. They found that children talked more when they were familiar with a story, and their talk changed form, reflecting different concerns and changing from questions to comments. Responses indicated greater depth of understanding and it seemed that as children gained control over certain aspects of the story, they were able to attend to other dimensions.

Repeated storybook readings often lead to attempts on the part of children to "pretend read." This emergent reading is one way that young children explore literacy holistically (Elster, 1994). Elster said that emergent readers look like readers in that they turn pages and attend to pictures and print; they sound like readers when they recreate book language; and they practice acting like readers. "Through shared reading with adults and emergent reading on their own, children develop understanding of the outer workings of reading before they master the inner workings of the alphabet." (Elster, 1994, p.403) Elster went on to report that studies show kindergarten children are more likely to engage in emergent readings with books that contain predictable language patterns than with books that are not predictable. Teachers can maximize the benefits of reading aloud and emergent reading in preschool and kindergarten classes by inviting children to participate actively in read-aloud sessions, allowing for opportunities for prediction and encouraging children to choose favorite books. Young children should have frequent opportunities to engage in book handling and emergent reading . Favorite books should be read repeatedly and these books should be available for children to look at on their own or with other children or adults. Teachers should observe emerging literacy in authentic situations, noting how children respond to questions, what type of questions they ask, how they participate in prediction and "chiming in," and what sources of information they seem to be using. Teale (1985) added that children involved in emergent storybook reading develop tremendously through

interacting with storybooks, using speech that builds a story, speech which eventually becomes highly "written" in nature.

Elster (1994) discussed the importance of talk during emergent reading sessions. Talk includes a dialogue with the listener, momentary balking on the part of the reader, and metalinguistic comments, and it plays an important role in framing and supporting emergent reading events. Interactive talk scaffolds the reading event; that is, it helps children remember story language and reflect on memories from previous read-aloud sessions. Elster believed more attention should be paid to the social interactions which scaffold young children's emergent reading and writing development. Strickland and Morrow (1990) stated that interactive behaviors during read-alouds support the positive effects of shared reading by encouraging questioning on the part of the child; scaffolding, praising and offering information on the part of the adult; and providing opportunities for discussion, sharing of personal reflections, and relating concepts to life experiences. Strickland and Morrow were specific about what interactive reading behavior looks like: adult and child should be close to each other, the book and pictures should be visible to the child, the children are active participants in story reading and their questions and comments are acknowledged and encouraged, and children are asked questions in a relaxed manner. Chapman (1986) said that interactive reading can expand children's views of the world by explaining new concepts at a developmentally appropriate level. It helps provide information about books and the reading process such as how to handle books, page turning, concepts of beginning, middle and end, author and table of contents. The child learns to get meaning from pictures as well as from text, particularly from repetitive phrases which encourage children to focus on words and text. Throughout the process of interactive reading, the adult is structuring the interactions so that children can participate successfully

while expanding their role to match their growing competence. Morrow (1988) reported studies that showed one-to-one readings in a school setting increased verbal participation and the complexity of verbal interchange, although it is not known whether or not they enhance literacy development. This increased responsiveness seems to be a result of repeated experience of one-to-one reading and adult interactive behavior. McGee and Richgels (1990) explained the importance of interactive story reading is that it uses the features of conversation to assist children in learning what to do with text so that gradually they can build sense from reading on their own.

Taylor (1983) spoke of the ethical difficulties of family intervention programs and the sociological and political impracticality of attempts to change reading instruction programs that are already in place in public schools, and concluded that what is needed is the development of a carefully planned, cooperative learning environment for young children, where children can learn the functions of print before they are introduced to the abstract literacy activities of many first grades.

Based on the findings of the many experts in the field of emerging literacy, the researcher has chosen an intervention that will provide the targeted group of early learners a daily one-to-one interactive storybook reading experience with adult readers. Adams (1990) felt that the most important activity for building the knowledge and skills eventually required for reading is that of reading aloud to children - even children who have had little or no other literacy activities at home. Morrow (1988) reported that one-to-one story readings in a school setting can increase low socio-economic children's question and comment responses to literature in both number and complexity as well as provide a rich source of information for children. According to Morrow, this seems to be an important strategy to incorporate into early childhood programs

at school, especially if children are not read to at home. By participating in a daily one-to-one book sharing experience, with supportive adults who are able to interact with the children using storybooks that provide many opportunities for repetition and emergent readings, these children will have a chance to increase their familiarity with books and book language.

Project Outcomes and Solution Components

As the result of the implementation of a one-on-one interactive reading program during the period of September, 1995 to February, 1996, the targeted kindergarten children will increase their acquisition of emergent literacy skills as measured by an increase in scores on the Concepts About Print (CAP) observation, classroom teacher observation of writing and reading behaviors, and observations of changes in children's story listening/reading behaviors made by adult readers during the time period of the treatment.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Develop a program of adult volunteers to engage in literacy activities with the targeted children on a daily basis.
2. Organize the volunteer program with the cooperation of the targeted classroom teacher.
3. Provide a variety of reading materials at appropriate reading and interest levels for children and adults to use in their interactions.
4. Provide opportunities for interactive story reading experiences
5. Allow for repeated readings of familiar storybooks and encourage children's emergent readings of familiar books.

Action Plan for the Intervention

I. Develop a program of adult volunteers

A. obtain approval from building principal

B. discuss feasibility of program with targeted classroom teacher

C. contact local PTA Board and present idea at board meeting

D. obtain names of and contact other possible adult volunteers from classroom teacher and principal

E. organize list of qualified volunteers (Appendix E)

F. meet with volunteers to discuss scheduling and provide training (see IV and V of Action Plan and Appendix F)

G. schedule volunteers to begin reading by mid-September

H. provide volunteers with record keeping document (Appendix G)

I. check on status of volunteers biweekly

II. Organize the volunteer program with cooperation of targeted classroom teacher

A. prepare parent permission letter for classroom teacher to distribute at kindergarten orientation. (Appendix D)

B. schedule days for administering the CAP, reading/writing surveys, and at-home reading surveys for AM and PM classes

C. spend approximately 5 days administering observation surveys in the targeted classroom

D. choose six children from AM class and six children from PM class for participation in shared reading program based on CAP scores, observation tasks, and with input from classroom teacher

E. schedule reading sessions in cooperation with classroom teacher - each targeted child is read to daily for ten minutes (Appendix H)

F. set up reading area in unused classroom, move in comfortable chairs, find location for weekly book supply and AM and PM record keeping folders (Appendices I and J)

G. consult regularly (weekly) with classroom teacher to receive feedback on progress of targeted children, teacher observations and concerns

III. Provide a variety of reading materials

A. each week provide a supply of different types of storybooks from my own collection, public library, school media center, including:

1. limited text books
2. books with more text
3. books with repetitive text and patterns
4. alphabet books
5. number books
6. fiction and non-fiction
7. classic children's stories
8. seasonal and holiday books
9. wordless picture books

B. familiar and favorite storybooks will be available repeatedly so children may choose them frequently

C. books will be housed in a labeled crate in designated location

IV. Interactive story reading should begin whenever reader/child are comfortable. (Appendix J) Reader will:

A. help child connect story content with what is already known

B. ask child questions frequently during reading

C. encourage child to ask questions during reading

D. respond to child's questions

E. ask for child's reactions to story

F. ask open-ended questions

G. discuss meanings of words

H. occasionally give own reaction to story

V. Allow for repeated readings and encourage emergent readings. Reader will:

A. allow for repeated readings whenever child requests - same story may be read frequently

B. allow for child to join in the reading of patterned text and repetitive text

C. allow and encourage child to "read" text if child is familiar with story due to repeated readings, using pictures for support and attending to features of print (pointing, moving from left to right); all attempts on part of child will be accepted

D. encourage child to engage in story-telling using wordless picture books, connecting meaning with details of illustrations

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, the Concepts About Print (CAP) observation will be readministered to the targeted children at the end of February, 1996. In addition, the classroom teacher will be making qualitative observations of the targeted children regarding any changes she observes in their language development, attention span during story reading, and other reading and writing behaviors. The weekly observations of the readers, as documented on the record-keeping sheets, will also be considered as evidence of changes in literacy behaviors.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve the emergent literacy skills of targeted kindergarten children. The intervention consisted of a one-on-one interactive reading program involving the targeted children and a group of adult volunteers.

The process of recruiting volunteers began before the beginning of the 1995-96 school year at a board meeting of the PTA that serves the targeted school as well as two other schools in the district. The program was explained by the researcher and people were asked to sign a sheet indicating their interest in finding out more about the program (Appendix E). In addition, the names of several other potential volunteers were obtained from the building principal and the teacher of the targeted classroom.

The potential volunteers were invited to an informational meeting in mid-September, at which time the program was explained in more detail. At this time the adult volunteers were asked to decide if they could make a weekly commitment to the reading program. The schedule was discussed and each volunteer signed up for either a morning or afternoon time slot on a particular

day of the week (Appendix H). A volunteer was found for each time slot and in addition three substitute readers agreed to be available as needed, if possible. During this meeting the researcher briefly discussed the technique of interactive reading with the volunteers, and each volunteer was given written guidelines to follow (Appendices F,I, and J). The volunteers were also shown the record keeping document and they were encouraged to record their observations of the children's listening and responding behaviors as the weeks passed.

Once the observation surveys were administered to the entire population of both the AM and PM classes, the researcher met with the classroom teacher and the principal to decide which children would be included in the program, based on the CAP scores and the observation tasks as well as the input of the classroom teacher. Six children from the AM class and six from the PM class were chosen. The reading area was arranged and the program was scheduled to begin the third week of September.

The researcher provided a variety of reading materials for the readers to share with the children. Each week the researcher brought a new supply of books and removed the books from the previous week. The researcher also collected the record keeping sheets at this time and provided new ones for the coming week. Whenever possible, the researcher notified the readers in advance of upcoming school holidays, non-attendance days, or field trips that would interfere with the reading program.

Early in the program the number of books provided was limited in number so the children would have an easier time selecting a book. As time went on, more books were provided and often they related to a theme being studied in the classroom. Whenever a book had a special feature that would lend itself to a particular type of interaction between reader and child, the researcher would make a note of it so the readers would be aware of how they might approach the

reading of that particular book. (See Appendix M for a complete listing of books used.)

In stopping by the targeted classroom each week with a new supply of books, the researcher had a chance to touch base with the classroom teacher to get feedback about how the program was progressing and to discuss any concerns the teacher or researcher might have. Early in the program, one of the volunteer readers called the researcher with a concern that her own child had been selected for the program. She wanted to discuss the child's test results with the researcher and share her concern that she did not want her child to be included in the program since so many of the volunteers were friends from the neighborhood and the parent felt there was a certain stigma attached to being identified as a child who was eligible for the program. The parent was given the option of not having her child included in the program, which is what she decided to do.

In the middle of October the researcher contacted the volunteers by phone or in person to see how they felt the program was going. The researcher followed up with a letter to the volunteers encouraging them to keep up the good work, and suggesting some techniques they might use with the children to encourage attention to print. (Appendix K) The researcher felt that it was not necessary to check on the status of the volunteers biweekly, since the program seemed to be running smoothly and the volunteer readers were providing useful feedback on the weekly record keeping sheets. One concern that several readers expressed was that some of the children seemed reluctant to leave the classroom when it was their turn to be read to because they did not like missing what was going on in their class. The record keeping sheets also showed evidence that many of the children were requesting the same books to be read repeatedly, from day to day. The readers comments indicated that some

children were beginning to engage in some degree of reading behaviors as early as November.

Early in December one of the volunteer readers had to quit the program due to job conflicts. Substitute readers filled in until the slot was filled shortly after the first of the year by a friend of one of the other readers. Later in December the researcher invited the readers to a social gathering in appreciation for their efforts. All the volunteers came and the classroom teacher and principal were also in attendance. This meeting included a discussion of how the volunteers felt the program was going and an opportunity for the readers to voice any concerns they might have. Some of the readers spoke of the behavior of a few of the children who had short attention spans and were often difficult to work with. Readers were encouraged to be patient and persistent. The researcher spoke to the readers about the reading becoming more interactive after the first of the year; readers should encourage pointing at text and looking for letters or words in text, and involve the children in wordless picture books. In addition some of the books that seemed to be favorites would be included again for repeated readings. The readers seemed to be willing to stay with the program until the end of the school year. Several suggested that one hour was really not enough time to read to all six children.

In December the researcher also had a lengthy conversation with the classroom teacher regarding the reading program. The classroom teacher suggested the idea of a survey to get the opinions of the readers regarding the positive and negative aspects of the program. She also wanted to include some of the familiar storybooks that she has been reading to the children in the classroom with the researcher's supply of books. This might allow for more "reading" behaviors on the part of the children. The researcher asked the classroom teacher if she would make some observational notes about any

changes in reading and listening behaviors she may have been noticing among the targeted children. The researcher and classroom teacher also discussed whether or not the targeted children should remain in the program for the balance of the school year of if other at-risk children should be given an opportunity to participate after the post-testing is completed. In addition, the benefits of the reading program other than those measured on the CAP were discussed. The classroom teacher and the researcher agreed that benefits such as enjoyment of stories, introduction to new concepts, understanding of book language, awareness of the importance of books, and the opportunity for conversations and interaction with caring adults are all possible benefits of the program that may not be measured by a test.

In a conversation with the researcher in January, the principal of the targeted school revealed that in a recent kindergarten staff development meeting in the school district the decision was made to use the modified CAP survey as an assessment tool for the kindergarten program. The principal felt that using this tool for assessment will guide the kindergarten teachers somewhat in their teaching of concepts about print. In addition, the kindergarten teachers plan to make a video tape modeling interactive reading that would be available to parents. Such a tape would show parents the techniques they might use with their own children at home as they read to them and would stress the importance of shared reading at home.

In February the volunteers were given a survey to complete indicating their opinions on the positive and negative aspects of the reading program (Appendix L). They were also asked to indicate if they would be willing to be involved in such a program next year and if so, would they be willing to give more than an hour a week.

The post-testing of the targeted children took place during the first week of March, 1996. Although the researcher tested only the children involved in the reading program, the principal decided to test the entire population of the targeted classroom to compare the scores of the children included in the program to those who were not included. In addition, the principal did follow-up testing on another kindergarten class in the targeted school that had no intervention during the 1995-96 school year. In this way, she could compare the CAP scores of the targeted children who did receive the intervention to those children who had similar CAP scores in September but received no intervention.

Following the tabulation of the CAP scores, the researcher met with the classroom teacher to discuss which children would remain in the reading program for the balance of the year, which children would be dropped, and which additional children would be given the opportunity to be read to for the balance of the year.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, the Concepts About Print (CAP) observation was readministered to the targeted children during the first week of March, 1996. The resulting CAP scores were compared to the initial CAP scores of the targeted children. A comparison of these scores is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Comparison of CAP Scores of Targeted Children
September 1995 - March 1996

AM Group

Child	September Score	March Score
1	8	17
2	8	9
3	7	12
4	7	16
5	4	10
6	4	11

PM Group

Child	September Score	March Score
7	6	12
8	6	14
9	6	10
10	4	13
11	4	11
12	3	11

The data would appear to suggest that the intervention had a positive effect on the acquisition of concepts about print as measured by the CAP. It should be noted that child #2, whose score went from 8 to 9, is from a home where Spanish is the primary language spoken, and as a result this child may be at a disadvantage when being asked to respond to questions asked in English.

The classroom teacher was asked to make observations regarding changes she observed in the targeted children's language development, attention spans during story reading, and other reading and writing behaviors. In general, the classroom teacher noted an improvement in most of the targeted children's listening and reading behaviors. The classroom teacher noted that with the exception of two, all the targeted children were attending well during whole group reading sessions, they appeared to be interested in stories, and they interacted in class discussions of stories. In addition, the classroom teacher noticed that at least three of the targeted children were becoming much more aware of classroom print, showing indications of emerging literacy such as locating words and letters and reading simple books that have become familiar to them. The classroom teacher had concerns about two of the targeted children, one of whom did not attend well in group settings, and the other who came from a home where there is a history of illiteracy.

The weekly observations of the volunteer readers proved to be helpful in reflecting changes in the listening and responding behaviors of the children in the reading program. Beginning in September, comments such as, "He enjoys the stories," and "She asked questions about the story," were common. Comments early in the program also indicated that several of the children were shy and reluctant to respond to the questions the readers asked. The readers often made observations regarding the children's level of involvement with the books, from wanting to turn pages to wanting to "read" to the readers. Often the children requested the same stories be read to them from day to day. As time went on, the readers comments indicated that the children were locating words, locating letters, predicting, asking questions about certain concepts, answering questions, and becoming involved in conversations with the readers. The readers indicated that the children were excited when they were able to "read"

familiar books to the readers, such as the classroom books that the classroom teacher included in the weekly supply of books. By the end of the intervention period, comments such as, "He likes to read along and count," and "She knew the words 'stop' and 'go'," were much more common.

In addition, the observations made by the readers often mentioned children's behaviors that were sometimes difficult to deal with, such as short attention spans and reluctance to leave the classroom where interesting and engaging activities were often taking place. These behaviors seemed to vary from day to day and it appeared that some readers had difficulty with a particular child while others made no mention of such problems.

The readers also made comments about the books, sometimes indicating that particular books were very appealing to the children while other books were less popular.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on changes in emergent literacy skills, the targeted children improved in the area of concepts about print as measured by the CAP. In addition, there was an improvement in the targeted children's listening and responding behaviors during large group story time as observed by the classroom teacher, and during one-on-one reading time as noted by the volunteer readers on the weekly record keeping sheets. It should be noted that the children in the targeted classroom are exposed to daily reading activities including whole group shared story reading time, and these types of activities could also contribute to an increase in CAP scores during the course of a school year.

There were other possible benefits to a one-on-one interactive reading program other than those that can be measured by an assessment tool or even readily observed by adults working with the children. These benefits included the enjoyment of stories, the introduction of new concepts, an understanding of the language of books, a growing awareness of the importance of books, and the opportunity for conversations and interactions with caring adults.

In addition to the immediate benefits to the children, the intervention may have additional benefits across the targeted school district. The building principal has worked with kindergarten teachers across the district to implement the use of the CAP as an assessment tool to measure the increase of concepts about print over the course of the school year. It is hoped that by using the CAP for assessment, the kindergarten teachers will attend to teaching important concepts about print. Also, the kindergarten teachers have been discussing the possibility of making a video that would model the techniques of interactive reading. Such a tape would be made available to parents and would hopefully encourage them to engage in interactive reading with their children at home.

The researcher would recommend the continuation of a one-on-one interactive reading program for kindergarten children who may not be acquainted with the conventions of book reading. The researcher would encourage kindergarten teachers to recruit volunteers who are able to commit their time on a regular basis to participate in such a project. The kindergarten teachers themselves could supply books and organize record keeping sheets, as well as schedule reading times according to their daily schedules. Finding reliable volunteers can be a challenge, and the researcher felt very fortunate that nine of the ten original volunteers remained involved in the project through the end of February, when the study ended, and that eight of the remaining ten volunteers were willing to continue on until the end of the school year. Although

a few kindergarten teachers in the district have expressed a concern for using volunteers' valuable time on so few children, the researcher would strongly encourage the teachers to allow their at-risk children the opportunity to benefit from the interactive reading experience.

REFERENCES CITED

Adams. M.J. (1990). Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print. Cambridge: MIT .

Blue Island Chamber of Commerce Demographic Data. (1990).

Carroll, J.B., & Walton, M. (1979). Has the reel reeding prablum bin lade bear? Summary comments on the theory and practice of early reading. In L. Resnick & P. Weaver (Eds.). Theory and practice of early reading (pp. 317-339). Hillside, NJ: Erlbaum Assoc., Inc.

Chapman, D.L. (1986). Let's read another one. In D.Tovey & J. Kerber (Eds.). Roles in literacy learning: A new perspective. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, Inc.

Clay, M. (1991). Becoming literate: The construction of inner control. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Clay, M.(1979). Reading: The patterning of complex behavior. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

Clements, N.E., & Warncke, E.W. (1994). Helping literacy emerge at school for less advantaged children. Young Children, 49, 22-26.

Dunning, D.B., Mason, J.M., & Stewart, J.P. (1994). Reading to preschoolers: A response to Scarborough and Dobrich (1994) and recommendations for future research. Developmental Review, 14, 324-339.

Doake, D.B. (1986). Learning to read: It starts in the home. In D.R. Tovey & J.E. Kerber (Eds.). Roles in literacy learning: A new perspective (pp.2-9). Newark, DE: International Reading Association, Inc.

Elster, C.A. (1984). I guess they do listen: Young children's emergent readings after adult read-alouds. Young Children, 49, 27-31.

Elster, C. (1994). Patterns within preschoolers emergent readings. Reading Research Quarterly, 29, 403-418.

Goodman, K.S., & Goodman, Y.M. (1979). Learning to read is natural. In L.B. Resnick & P.A. Weaver (Eds.). Theory and practice of early reading, Vol. I (pp137-154). Hillsdale,NJ: Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Goodman, Y., & Haussler, M. (1986). Literacy development in the home and community. In D. Tovey & J. Kerber (Eds.). Roles in literacy learning: A new perspective (pp.). Newark, DE: International reading Association.

Greaney, V. (1986). Parental influences on reading. The Reading Teacher, 39, 813-818.

Hiebert, E. H. (1988). The role of literacy experiences in early childhood programs. The Elementary School Journal, 89, 161-171.

Holdaway, D. (1979). The foundations of literacy. Gosford, N.S.W.: Ashton Scholastic.

Lonigan, C. (1994). Reading to preschoolers: Is the emperor really naked? Developmental Review, 14, 303-323.

Martinez, M., & Roser, N. (1985). Read it again: The values of repeated readings during storytime. Reading Teacher, 38, 782-786.

Mason, J., & Sinha, S. (1993). Emerging literacy in the early childhood years: Applying a Vygotskian model of learning and development. In B. Spodek (Ed.). Handbook of research on the education of young children (pp. 137- 150). New York: Macmillan.

McCormick, C.E., & Mason, J.M. (1980). Intervention procedures for increasing pre-school children's interest in and knowledge about reading. In W. Teale & E. Sulzby (Eds.). Emergent literacy: Reading and writing (pp. 90 - 115). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp.

McGee, L.M., & Richgels, D.J. (1990). Literacy's beginnings: Supporting young readers and writers. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Morrow, L. M. (1988). Young children's responses to one-on-one story readings in school settings. Reading Research Quarterly, 22, 89-107.

Morrow, L.M., O'Connor, E.M., & Smith, J.K. (1990). Effects of a story reading program on the literacy development of at-risk kindergarten children. Journal of Reading Behavior, 22, 255-274.

Payne, A.C., Whitehurst, G.J., & Angell, A.L. (1994). The role of home literacy environment in the development of language ability in preschool children from low-income families. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 9, 427-440.

Scarborough, H.S., & Dobrich, W. (1994). On the efficacy of reading to preschoolers. Developmental Review, 14, 245-302.

Scarborough, H.S., & Dobrich, W. (1994). Another look at parent-preschooler book reading: How naked is the emperor? Developmental Review, 14, 340-347.

School District 130 Quality Review Documentation. (1994-95).

School District 130 School Report Card. (1994).

Slaughter, J.P. (1993). Beyond storybooks: Young children and the shared book experience. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, Inc.

Strickland, D., & Morrow, L.M. (1990). Family literacy: Sharing good books. Reading Teacher, 44, 518-519.

Sulzby, E. (1985). Children's emergent readings of favorite storybooks: A developmental study. Reading Research Quarterly, 20. 458-481.

Taylor, D. (1983). Family literacy. Exeter: Heinemann.

Taylor, D., & Walls, L. (1990). Educating parents about their children's early literacy development. The Reading Teacher, 44, 73-75.

Teale, W. H. (1978). Positive environments for learning to read: What studies of early readers tell us. Language Arts, 55, 922-932.

Teale, W. H. (1981). Parents reading to their children: What we know and need to know. Language Arts, 58, 902-912.

Teale, W. H. (1984). Reading to young children: Its significance for literacy development. In H. Goelman, A. Oberg, & F. Smith (Eds.). Awakening to literacy (pp. 101-121). London: Heinemann.

Teale, W.H.,& Sulzby, E. (1989). Emergent literacy: New perspectives. In D. Strickland & L. M. Morrow (Eds.). Emerging literacy: Young children learn to read and write (pp. 1-15). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Teale, W.H., & Sulzby, E. (1986). Introduction: Emergent literacy as a perspective for examining how young children become writers and readers. In W. Teale & E, Sulzby (Eds.). Emergent literacy: Writing and reading (pp. vii-xxv). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Whitehurst, G.J., Falco, F.L., Lonigan, C.J., Fischel, J.E., DeBaryshe, B.D., Valdez-Menchaca, M.C., & Caulfield, M. (1988). Accelerating language development through picture book reading. Developmental Psychology, 24, 552-559.

APPENDICES

CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT SCORE SHEET

Modified Version

Date: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ TEST SCORE: 120

Recorder: _____ Date of Birth: _____ STANINE GROUP: _____

PAGE	SCORE	ITEM	COMMENT
Cover		1. Front of book	
2/3	-- -	2. Print contains message	
4/5 4/5 4/5 4/5		3. Where to start 4. Which way to go 5. Return sweep to left 6. Word by word matching	
6		7. First and last concept	
7		8. Bottom of picture	
8/9		9. Begin 'The' (*Sand*) or 'I' (*Stones*) bottom line, top OR turn book	
10/11		10. Line order altered	
12/13 12/13 12/13		11. Left page before right	
14/15 14/15			
16/17 16/17 16/17 16/17		12 Meaning of full stop 13 Locate 14 S-s T t (*Stones*)	 S T
18/19		15-16 Reversible words was, no	was no
20 20 20 20		17 One letter: two letters 18 One word: two words 19 First and last letter of word 20 Capital letter	

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix B

Observation of Writing and Reading Behaviors

Activity Writing - understands difference between pictures and print

Activity Writing - directional movement

Activity Writing - recognizable letters

Activity Reading - one-to-one match

Activity Reading - directional movement

Activity Connects meaning with writing and reading

Appendix C

Interview/Survey At-Home Reading Activities

Child's Name _____

1. What is fun about reading?

2. What is not fun about reading?

3. Do you have any books of your own at home?

   If yes, how many? 1-10___ 11-25___ more than 25___

4. Does anyone at home ever read to you?

   If yes, who?

   If yes, how often? Everyday___ Once a week___ Other___

5. Do you ever go to the library to get books?
   If yes, how often?

6. Do you have your own paper, pencils, crayons and/or markers at home?

7. Do you ever write your own stories at home?

Appendix D

August 29, 1995

Dear Kindergarten Parent

I am a School District 130 teacher, currently teaching Reading Recovery and the Primary Gifted Program. I am also enrolled in a field based Master's Program at St. Xavier University. As part of my coursework, I will be working on a research project during the 1995-96 school year. Since the area I am concentrating on is young children's reading and writing, I have chosen to focus my attention on the literacy learning that takes place during the kindergarten year. To be more specific, I will be looking for patterns of growth that occur among kindergarten children in Mrs. Roesing's classes in certain areas of reading and writing. If you are willing to let your child be a part of my study, please sign below. If you wish to speak to me about this research project, I can be reached at Lincoln School, 385-5370. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Mrs. Corinne Ufferman

I give permission for my child to be a part of the research project.

Child's name_____

Parent Signature_____ Date_____

As a part of my research project, I am interested in knowing what type of formal preschool or daycare experience your kindergarten child has had, if any, and for how long. Please complete the following.

Child's Name_____

Name of Preschool/Day-care facility_____

How many years?_____

Yes I am interested in finding out more about being a volunteer reader.

Name Phone

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

Appendix F

Guidelines for Volunteer Readers

First and foremost, the shared reading experience should be an enjoyable one for both you and the lucky children you will be reading to! Become comfortable with the children you work with - get to know them by talking with them about their interests. Be sure they know what to call you - Mrs (Mr.) So-and-so or by your first name.

You will be working one-on-one with each child for ten minutes at a time. The reading will take place in room 6, right next door to Mrs. Roesing's classroom. There will be a supply of books in a labeled box in Mrs. Roesing's room. The record-keeping folders will also be in the box.

The child will choose the book(s) for you to read each day. Repeated readings of favorite stories are allowed and encouraged.

As you read, be sure the child is sitting so that he/she can see the pictures and text. As you read, you may wish to occasionally point to a particular word, a feature of an illustration, or to an entire line of print as you are reading it, so the child can see that you are reading from left to right. (Do this only if you are comfortable with it.)

As you become more comfortable with each child, you might want to interact with the child during and after the reading. The following ideas may guide you:

- ask questions during reading
- encourage children to ask questions
- respond to children's questions
- help child connect story with his/her own experiences by asking if child has ever done that, seen that, thought of that, etc.
- ask child to react to story by asking questions such as, "What did you think of that?" "What would you have done?" "How would you have felt?"
- discuss meanings of words in story
- occasionally tell child your own reaction to story
- accept the child's responses even if they seem inaccurate to you

Repeated readings of favorite storybooks are encouraged. If you are reading a book with a lot of repetitions or patterns, allow the child to join in with you if he/she wants to. Pointing to the print in such books is a helpful idea. When a child seems very familiar with a story, he/she may want to "read" it to you, using pictures for support. Accept attempts and support the child as necessary. Use wordless picture books to encourage the child to tell the story, once again using picture details to find meaning.

Appendix G

Day of week_____ **Week of**_____

Child's Name	**Book Titles**	**Readers Observations** (Child's reactions, questions, discussion, comments, etc)

AM	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
MORNING	9:30 - 10:30	9:30 - 10:30	9:30 - 10:30	10:00 - 11:00	10:30 - 11:30

PM	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AFTERNOON	12:40 - 1:40	12:40 - 1:40	12:40 - 1:40	12:40 - 1:40	12:40 - 1:40

Appendix H

Guidelines for Volunteer Readers

1) Classroom door open at all times

2) Child and adult sit side by side in the easy chairs - no lap sitting

3) Approximately 10 minute time limit per child -a timer will be available if you wish to use it

4) Child chooses book(s) - repeated readings are allowed and encouraged

5) Make sure child can see the book during reading

6) Record title(s) of book(s) each day for each child and note any observations - child's attention, behavior, comments child may have made, things child may have noticed during reading, attempts to locate letters/words, attempts to "read" or tell story or finish patterns in a story

7) Report any problems or concerns to Mrs. Roesing, Mrs. Eddy, or me (Mrs. Ufferman)

Tips on Reading to Children

1) Briefly introduce the book - read the title, look at the cover illustrations, encourage input from the child by asking, "What do you think this story might be about?"

2) Read with expression - surprise, humor, suspense, kindness, and love can all be expressed by your voice.

3) Engage the child in what is being read:

- talk about characters and their reasons for doing what they're doing
- make predictions - have the child tell what might happen next and then read to confirm
- link information in the book to real life experiences by asking, "Have you ever done that, seen that, gone there, etc."
- talk about the author's use of language - "funny" words, rhyming patterns, number patterns, book language such as, "Once upon a time" or "Happily ever after."
- draw connections among various books - "Oh, look, here's another story about Spot!" (or bears, Halloween, dinosaurs, etc.)

4) Read favorite stories - again and again, at the child's request.

October 30,1995

Dear Volunteer Readers

The past few weeks, I have attempted to contact each of you, either in person or by phone (sometimes by playing phone tag!), to check on your impressions about how the Volunteer Reading program is going. I was pleased to hear that each of you had positive feedback, as well as a few concerns about individual children. I am finding the record-keeping sheets to be extremely informative, particularly the comments you have been making about the children's reactions to stories and their attempts to "read" with you. Please keep up the good work! At this point, some of the children are probably starting to notice many things about how books are read and perhaps some characteristics of words and letters. If the children seem capable and willing, you may want to start showing them a little more about direction by having them point with you as you read, or by seeing if they can locate certain words on a page. For example, maybe a word that is written very large or a word under a picture. Noticing first letters of certain words is another idea. However, don't let this kind of activity get in the way of the enjoyment of the stories.

The coming weeks will be interrupted with Conference days as well as the holidays. Whenever possible, I will let you know the week ahead if there will be no school on a particular day. Please remember to call one of our "subs" if you can't make it on your day. I'm so pleased with the dedication you have shown to the children. The Volunteer Readers Project is definitely a success!

Thanks for your time. Remember to call me with any concerns you might have!

Corinne

Corinne Ufferman

Appendix L

Volunteer Reader Survey

Please respond to the following questions.

1. In your opinion, what has been the most positive result of the time you have spent reading with the children?

2. What difficulties have you experienced in working with the children in the reading program?

3. What changes have you observed in the listening/reading behaviors of the children you have worked with?

4. What suggestions do you have to improve the Volunteer Reading Program?

5. Would you consider volunteering for such a program again next year?_____

   If yes, would you be willing to volunteer more than one hour a week?_____

6. Please add any other comments or suggestions.

Appendix M

Weekly List of Books Used

Week 1 9/18

1. Big Bird's Color Game
2. I Went Walking
3. Mine!
4. Clifford the Big Red Dog
5. Spot Goes to School
6. My Little Dinosaur

Week 2 9/25

1. Big Bird's Color Game
2. I Went Walking
3. Mine!
4. Clifford the Big Red Dog
5. Spot Goes to School
6. My Little Dinosaur
7. Five Little Monsters
8. Hide and Seek with Snuff
9. Three Bedtime Stories

Week 3 10/2

1. Corduroy
2. Weather
3. 1,2,3 Juggle with Me
4. The Three Little Pigs
5. Puppies Are Like That
6. Clifford's Family
7. Old MacDonald Had a Farm
8. The Color Box

Week 4 10/9

1. Corduroy
2. Weather
3. 1,2,3 Juggle with Me
4. The Three Little Pigs
5. Puppies Are Like That
6. Clifford's Family
7. Old MacDonald Had a Farm
8. The Color Box
9. Our Animal Friends at Maple Hill Farm

Week 5 10/16

1. Our Animal Friends at Maple Hill Farm
2. Are You My Mother?
3. Hattie and the Fox
4. What's Claude Doing?
5. Exactly the Opposite
6. One Little Teddy Bear
7. Where's My Teddy/

Week 6 10/23

1. The Three Bears
2. Harold and the Purple Crayon
3. Let's Count 1,2,3
4. Have You Seen My Duckling?
5. Clap Your Hands
6. Colors of Things
7. Tom's Rainbow Walk
8. That Terrible Baby
9. Anno's Counting Walk

Week 7 10/30

1. Bears on Wheels
2. Clifford's Pals
3. Raccoons and Ripe Corn

4. Big Red Barn

5. Grandmother and I

6. One Fall Day

7. My Best Shoes

8. My First ABC

Weeks 8 and 9 11/6 and 11/13

1. How Many?

2. Crocodile Beat

3. Oh My Baby Bear

4. The Little Engine That Could

5. There Was An Old Lady

6. The Aminal

7. I'm Too Small You're Too Big

8. Where Are You, Little Green Dragon

9. The Wonder Shoes

10. Good-bye House

11. While I Slept

Week 10 11/20

1. The Cat in the Hat

2. Meet Babar and His Family

3. The Costume Parade

4. Just For You

5. Brown Bear, Snow Bear

6. Richard Scarry's Animal Nursery Tales

Week 11 11/27

1. I Love You Bunny Rabbit

2. I Have a Loose Tooth

3. Watch Where You Go

4. Where is the Bear at School

5. If you Give a Mouse a Muffin

6. On the edge of the Sea

7. Winter Games

8. Life on the Land

9. Life in the Air

10. Five Little Ducks

Week 12 12/4

1. Sing a Song of People

2. Geraldine's Big Snow

3. I Took My Frog to the Library

4. Where Can it Be

5. Peter's Chair

6. The Snowy Day

7. The Happy Day

8. Two Bear Cubs

9. Whose Mouse Are You?

10. Patch Work Island

Week 13 12/11

!. The Bear's Christmas

2. Clifford's Christmas

3. Merry Christmas, Mom and Dad

4. Asleep, Asleep

5. Not So Rotten Ralph

6. The Three Bears

7. Look! Snow!

8. Playgrounds

9. Three Little Kittens

10. That's Not Santa

11. Claude the Dog

Week 14 12/18

1. The Bear's Christmas

2. Clifford's Christmas

3. Merry Christmas, Mom and Dad

4. The Bear's Bicycle

5. Arthur's New Puppy

6. Goodnight Moon

7. Changes, Changes

8. Deep in the Forest

9. The Lucky Glasses

Week 15 1/8

1. Brown Bear, Snow Bear

2. Five Little Monsters

3. The Three Little Pigs

4. Where's My Teddy?

5. One Little Teddy Bear

6. Arthur's Nose

7. What's Under the Ocean?

8. Oh My Baby Bear!

9. The Little Engine That Could

10. The Snowy Day

Week 16 1/15

1. I Love My Mommy Because

2. Annabelle and the Big Slide

3. Mother, Mother, I Want Another

4. The Scrap Doll

5. A Plant Called Spot

6. My House

7. The Trouble With Elephants

8. Goodnight Goodnight

9. So Many Cats

10. Come to My Party

11. Would They Love a Lion?

Week17 1/22

1. Edward Loses his Teddy Bear

2. Is Anyone home?

3. Super, Super, Super Words

4. When Dinosaurs Go Visiting

5. Tikki Tikki Tembo

6. The Dream Pillow

7. Sing a Song of Sixpence

8. Binky Gets a Car

9. Mr. Bear's Boat

10. New Baby

11. Am I Beautiful?

Week 18 1/29

1. Clive Eats Alligators

2. Matthew's Dream

3. Hi, Word Bird

4. My Favorite Time of Year

5. The Surprise Family

6. The Button Box

7 Ten in a Bed

8 The Jacket I Wear in the Snow

9 Bedtime Cat

10 I Had a Cat

Week 19 2/5

1 Clive Eats Alligators

2 Matthew's Dream

3 Hi, Word Bird

4 My Favorite Time of Year

5 The Surprise Family

6 The Button Box

7 Ten in a Bed

8 The Jacket I Wear in the Snow

9 Bedtime Cat

10 I Had a Cat

11 Mousekin's Special Day

12 What Next, Baby Bear

13 Tikki Tikki Tempo

14 Mama If You Had a Wish

15 The Baby House

16 Peace At Last

Week 20 2/12

1. Waiting for Mom
2. Gray Rabbit's Odd One Out
3. The Great Valentine's Day surprise
4. I Went Walking
5. The Cat in the Hat
6. Corduroy
7. The Wheels on the Bus
8. Five Little Monkeys
9. Where's Willie?
10. Opposites Book
11. Seven Diving Ducks

Week 21 2/19

1. Pippin Learns a Lot
2. My First Grade
3. The Animals Who Changed Their Colors
4. Sleep Tight
5. The Camel Who Left the Zoo
6. Alphabet
7. The Completed Hickory Dickory Dock
8. Bear Shadow
9. Six Special Places
10. Collecting
11. What's the Matter Sylvi, Can't You Ride?

12 Roll Over, Rosie

Week 22 2/26

1 From One to One Hundred

2 One Hundred Hungry Ants

3 Let's Make Rabbits

4 Hot on the Scene

5 Everything Has a Place

6 Gone Fishing

7 The Strongest One of All

8 Two Bear Cubs

9 The Button Box

10 Where's the Bear?

Week 23 3/5

1 Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear?

2 Arnie and the New Kid

3 Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed

4 My Brown Bear Barney

5 Lee Henry's Best Friend

6 You'll Never Guess

7 Too Many Hopkins

8 Haircuts for the Woolseys

9 A Hat for Minerva Louise

10. School Bus

11. Da:cy and Gram Don't Like Babies

12. Mouse TV